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Letters to the Editor

Furman University

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ON SOUTHERN WOMANHOOD

I thoroughly enjoyed the spring issue of *Furman*, with one glaring exception, the Perspective article entitled "Unringing the Belle." The article in question purports to be about dispelling stereotypes of Southern women, but the author resorts to examples from 65-plus years ago to make the case that these stereotypes exist today. It sounds more like the author is the one holding on to the stereotypes. What's most disappointing is that the examples provided are some of the worst possible, in my view, and make one wonder if the author read beyond the opening paragraphs of the works from which she quotes. Scarlett O'Hara is one of the strongest and most memorable characters, male or female, in all of American literature and on screen. Mammy is also unforgettable. She is dignified, smart, humble, determined, and classy. Even the author's attempt at explanation for the continuing stereotypes sounds like a stereotype. She says that it is carried on by "white Southern patriarchy." This is

offensive on more than one level, exposing what appears to be the author's own prejudice. She concludes with a statement of belief in how a Southern woman should be perceived, which includes attributes such as strength and courage that center primarily around "indomitability." There has seldom, if ever, been a woman portrayed or written as indomitable as Scarlett O'Hara.

Bob Clyburn '85
Grayson, GA



Just read Lynne Shackelford's "Unringing the Belle" and am wondering why it was published as written, as it confuses its own thesis and provides no authority, save a hazy wish-fulfillment on the part of its author, for its assertions. The article seems to conflate civil rights for black women with "women's rights." As only one of two separate examples of this, Rosa Parks didn't sit in the front of the bus because "women" were not allowed in those seats, but rather because "blacks" weren't allowed to sit in those seats. It is also counter-instructive to drub *Gone with the Wind* as a hallmark of the "false" portrait of the Southern woman. Apparently, Scarlett's physical, hands-on confrontation [with] the armed and dangerous Yankee soldier at Tara isn't enough to qualify her as a "strong" ideal Southern woman. Southern women

have always known how to deal with the menfolk, and they're evolutionary masters at survival, although this knowledge came to them from their grandmothers. Furman grads, and the South in general, don't need lecturing on the steel magnolia in the blood of our girls and women. Thank you all the same.

K.E. Culbertson '83
Brown Summit, NC

"CONSENT" CONSENSUS

I cannot tell you how thrilled I was to see Title IX on the cover of your issue—never before have I been more proud of my *alma mater*, and I assure you Furman has given me many things to be proud of. I am currently serving as Lynn University's Title IX Coordinator/University Compliance Officer, and I wanted to congratulate you on your continued efforts to be proactive in approaching an issue that has so many higher education administrators stumped and frustrated. The Furman culture defined who I am, and I have seen great success in bringing the Furman "way" to my university. My youngest sister, Lydia Fink, will be joining the class of 2019 this fall at Furman, and I am thrilled to know that she is in good hands!

Lorna Fink '11
Boca Raton, FL

The spring issue's article, "The Know of 'No', The Guess of 'Yes'" fosters today's practice of parsing words to lay blame and shirk responsibility. Do you recall a U.S. president parsing the word "is"? Date rape isn't a matter of failure to communicate—it's an issue of failure to assume personal responsibility on the part of both the men and the women involved. So long as we endorse sexual activity outside marriage, date rape will thrive. And it seems we're doing that. To wit, quoting the author, "At Furman, Cassidy [Furman's associate vice president for student life] speaks to groups of young men about making good, low-risk choices and tells them what they need to do to be protected when they are engaging in sexual activity." Sadly, we're becoming a nation more concerned with preserving our rights than doing what's right. And personal responsibility is missing in action.

Ty Dodge '68
Birmingham, AL

PHILANTHROPY AND FURMAN

I liked the article entitled "The Ask" in the last issue. Great idea, and good to let the larger university community into Furman's world. And I love the last two issues of the magazine: visually stunning, intellectually challenging, and culturally



Q WHAT QUALITY DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES?

Read more Quotables in Class Notes, starting on page 50.



"SOMEONE WHO IS MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES RATHER THAN THEIR PERSONAL LEGACY."

— TAYLORSWIFTFAN62735224

relevant. Just the kind of excellence I love to see coming out of our *alma mater*!

*Lee C. Dilworth '83
Brentwood, TN*

IN GENERAL

I usually have a stack of magazines sitting on the coffee table, just waiting to be read months after they arrive in the

mail. I'm sure you've already heard it a hundred times over, but I just wanted to send a quick note about how great the spring issue looked. The design was clean and really surprised me. It didn't feel like a for-alumni publication at all. Great job again. Looking forward to the next one.

*Winifred Leung '09
Broomfield, CO*

Just wanted to tell you what a beautiful and well-written issue this is. I always enjoy receiving it and certainly felt this was one of the best produced. Great stories, exciting to see where alumni have gone, as well as all the reasons Furman is an exceptional educational choice. I am extremely grateful for the amazing generosity of the school to support my daughter's four years there.

*Martha Gilmartin
Greenville, SC*

The *Furman* magazine is something to be proud of. I especially like how it gives a sense of Furman as an urban and today kind of place, but not in a flashy or silly way. It's smart and sharp—a magazine, not a visual aid.

*Woody Register
Sewanee, TN*

CORRECTIONS

We regret the following errors in our prior issue: The location and date in E. Donald Crapps's obituary should have been listed as Troy, Alabama and October 22.

Also, in the article "Past is Prologue," it was stated that Jen Hanna was let go as Furman's golf coach in 2012. Hanna resigned her position.

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EDITOR

Brendan Tapley

DESIGNER

Jack Dylan

CONTRIBUTORS

William Aarnes
Luke Christie '15
Julia Cowart
William Crooks '14
Kate Dabbs '09
Elizabeth Davis
Brian Faulkenberry
Jeremy Fleming '09
A. Scott Henderson
Bill Jacobson
M. Linda Lee
Melinda Menzer
Savita Nair
Raenae Nay
Eric Ogden
Damien Pierce
Lindsay Niedringhaus '07
Julia Roberts '16
Julie Stackhouse '01
Morgan Sykes
Ed Tarkington '95
Ron Wagner '93

CLASS NOTES EDITOR

Nell Smith

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